



# The HARC Spark

May/June, 1999

The Official Newsletter of the  
Holmesburg Amateur Radio Club



Editors: KB3AKK  
WA3PZO

## PREZ SAYS!

Well it's been a few months since we got a newsletter out. But here it is, hopefully back on schedule. You know the expression I'll do it in a "jiffy." I just found out a jiffy is a real unit of measurement. Would you believe its 1/100 of a second? It's time to start acting that fast or you'll miss the upcoming events.

The May meeting will be a presentation by the National Weather Service on Skywarn. With all of the recent news of tornadoes and Philadelphia being hit by one last year, it's time to learn how you can be part of a team helping the National Weather Service and your neighbors. See you on May 27th.

At the June meeting we will have an informal auction of ham radio related gear. A few days later from Field Day through July 4<sup>th</sup> we'll celebrate Independence Week in Philadelphia. Club members will have the opportunity to use the special callsign **W3P** through July 4th! Read-on for details!

If you missed the April Club meeting, you missed a unique presentation. **CQ VHF** columnist, WA3PZO, (who?), talked about ham radio operations in Yugoslavia. Bob described how hams were serving the government of Yugoslavia by tuning in on NATO war planes as they were bombing their country. This information was reported in a mid-May Pentagon briefing. Watch for Bob's article in the July issue of **CQ VHF** and additional coverage in the August issue.

**SKYWARN  
TRAINING  
THURSDAY, MAY 27<sup>TH</sup>  
HARC CLUB MEETING  
SPEAKER  
JOE MIKETTA  
NATIONAL WEATHER  
SERVICE**

## CQ CQ CQ DE W3P W3P W3P

HARC has been issued the call, **W3P**, for the period 1800Z **June 26** to 1800Z **July 4** to celebrate Independence Day in Philadelphia. The "Welcome 3 Philadelphia" call has been issued under the special 1x1 callsign program. This year HARC will use the call during Field Day and then the call will be available to any HARC member to operate on any band they are licensed on up to and including Advance privileges. You can not operate beyond your license class, unless someone with a higher license is present and in no case can you use the Extra band privileges. This is because the call is licensed to WA3PZO who has an Advance class license. In **QST**, W3P is listed as:

**Philadelphia, PA:** Holmesburg Amateur Radio Club, W3P, 1800Z **June 26** to 1800Z **July 4**, Welcome America/Independence Day celebration, 7.240 14.240 146.685. Certificate. Holmesburg ARC, PO Box 6253, Philadelphia, PA 19136.

If you're interested in operating the call and being on the receiving end of a pile-up contact WA3PZO. You can sign up for a band, a mode, a time period. All you have to do is sign-up! Log your contacts and turn a copy of your log into WA3PZO.

This is a great opportunity to publicize the city, HARC, and have a great time operating from the comfort of your home.

So if you're ready to call CQ, contact Bob, WA3PZO.

**CQ FD de W3P**

## **FIELD DAY**

Field day is fast approaching and once again, HARC will be at Avelthorpe Park in Abington Township on June 26<sup>th</sup> & June 27<sup>th</sup>. We already have a set-up crew, but more hands are always welcomed! If you would like to help out with the set-up, contact Bob (WA3PZO), Dave (KB3AKK), or Mike (N3LXN). All final details will be worked out at the May AND June Meetings. Make plans to come out and attend field day this year. If you have never experienced what field day is, or have never worked an HF contest, here is your chance. There will be plenty of experienced contestants on hand to help you out.

## **JUNE MEETING**

**June 24<sup>th</sup>**

## **A HARC AUCTION**

**To Remember**

That's right. It's time to get clean out your basement and bring your junque to the this year's HARC Auction. We'll auction off anything that is ham or computer related. HARC will assume NO responsibility for the condition of the items. Buyer beware!

Bring your stuff to the HARC Auction. Make sure it is labeled with owner, description, and if there is a minimum amount or bid. Our entertaining auctioneer will do his best to have someone else walk home with it.

Here are the rules:

1. Ham or computer related.
2. Club gets 10% of the sale, not to exceed \$10.00
3. Club assumes no responsibility for items sold.
4. All decisions of the auction committee are Final.

## **HARC's 10 Meter Net**

Just a reminder that the HARC 10 meter net is still going strong. It is on Sunday mornings at 9:00 am on 28.450 (+-) QRM with Ron KB3AAJ as net control. There have been a few DX check-ins over the last few weeks, so don't miss out!

**BRING A FRIEND  
TO A  
HARC MEETING**

## **JULY EVENTS**

Several events are coming up in July.

July 2 – Night at the Phillies. We have group tickets available to see some of the best fireworks in the city and a good baseball game too! Tickets are \$14 and in the 500 level behind 1<sup>st</sup> base. If you're interested in attending contact WA3PZO.

July 11 – Two – that's right – two events in one day.

We have been asked to help with the American Cancer Society event starting in the Independence Hall area and making its way over the Ben Franklin Bridge. At this point New Jersey hams will take over. It's an early morning event, rain or shine. Contact KB3AKK.

We'll also have a table at the MARC hamfest in Kimberton, PA (Valley Forge). We will be promoting the club and as an added feature we'll advertise hosting a well known national ham radio magazine columnist. This will work out well since Bob has the feature article in the July issue. If you want to help out, contact WA3PZO.

Looking forward to August. HARC's annual picnic will be August 22.

## **Personal Review of the VC-H1**

**By Jay, WA3IFY**

"For the last 2 years I have been on SSTV (slow scan tv) mostly on 2 meters with a few friends, we meet about twice a week, and send each other pictures. The same is also done on HF at 14.230, 28.680 and other frequencies. The software for that is available in the internet, and can be downloaded from [www.siliconpixels.com](http://www.siliconpixels.com). While looking at a catalog recently, I saw that Kenwood is selling the VC-H1 what they call a visual communicator. It consists of a CCD camera, LCD monitor, it is very compact, about the size of an HT. It is battery operated (4 AA batteries) it also comes with an AC adaptor. Once it is hooked up to a transceiver & nbsp , one can send and receive pictures. With the 1.8 inch TFT screen, one can view incoming images or view one's own prior to transmission. It has a built-in mike and speaker. Stores up to 10 pictures. The camera is removable and a video camera can be connected. The VC-H1 can be controlled from a PC with optional kit, (Windows 95 required) to save pictures in JPG format.

Needles to say, I bought the VC-H1 and have been enjoying very much. I just want to emphasize that this is a self contained unit, and no other software is required.

### **SB QST ARL ARLB023** **FCC says reciprocal permits now "paperless"**

The FCC is advising applicants for reciprocal operating permits that an application is no longer required. Under new ULS rules that took effect February 12, the FCC Form 610A has passed into history. The new rules also will pave the way for US hams to more easily operate in most of Europe. The FCC is expected to issue a Public Notice in the near future that will spell out the details.

Alien visitors to the US holding an amateur license issued by their home country may operate in the US without submitting any FCC paperwork--provided that a reciprocal operating agreement is in effect between the two countries. The only documentation required is proof of citizenship and an Amateur Radio license issued by the country of citizenship. These arrangements are similar to long standing arrangements between the US and Canada.

The new rules move the US a step closer to participation in the licensing arrangements of CEPT, the European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations. The US State Department applied for US participation in 1997, and the request was approved in early 1998. Completion of the final steps to make this a reality is understood to be imminent. These include formal US notification to the European Radiocommunications Office that it is prepared to carry out its responsibilities under CEPT Recommendation T/R 61-01, and the issuance of a Public Notice in English, French and German.

Under the CEPT arrangements, a US Technician licensee will be recognized as holding the equivalent of a CEPT Class 2 (VHF-only) license. Holders of Tech Plus through Extra tickets will have the full HF and VHF privileges of a CEPT Class 1 license. Novice licensees will not be eligible.

Additionally, the ARRL has informed the US State Department that it plans to go forward in April with arrangements to issue International Amateur Radio Permits to US hams in accordance with the CITEL Amateur Convention, signed by several countries in the

Americas. The League has offered its services to issue IARPs to US hams. An IARP is not a license, but it certifies the existence of a license.

The new rules will not change the procedures for US hams wishing to operate overseas in countries that are not CEPT members or CITEL Amateur Convention signatories.

### **Tapping out Taps for Morse code use**

COMMUNICATIONS: An era ends today, with the official demise of the telegrapher's art.

By Steve Wiegand, Sacramento Bee

SACRAMENTO - Sometime today, somewhere in the world, a sentinel on some far flung coast will tap out a series of dots and dashes on a wireless telegraph key - and an institution will "SOS".

In this case, that stands for "Sink Out of Sight".

After a century of serving as the communications lifeline for thousands of ships and millions of sailors and passengers, the use of Morse code as the standard means of sending a distress call will officially end.

As of today, ships around the world will rely on a high-tech, satellite-linked communications system called the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System, or GMDSS.

Cliff Simonsen, a US Coast Guard chief warrant officer at Point Reyes, still keeps a telegraph key, or "bug," on his desk and tapped out a few mournful words during a recent telephone conversation.

"For those of us who have been at it a long time - I've been doing it 30 years - it's a little sad to see the end of it," Simonsen said.

More than the end of a seagoing safety system, it also marks the demise of the last significant use of the world's first information superhighway - and servers as a "sic transit gloria" warning for apostles of the internet."It shows that everything gets out of date," Simonsen said.

"The GMDSS is not only more effective, it takes fewer people, which means less money, which keeps Congress happy when they get the bills. So it's good for the taxpayer, too."

The GMDSS was established in 1988 by the International Marine Organization, a UN agency that oversees international shipping safety, and it was required to be on all passenger ships and cargo ships less than 300 tons and all commercial ships that travel into international waters by today.

Under the new system, someone on a ship in distress can push a specific button for a specific problem - sinking, capsizing, dead in the water. The continuous signal is automatically relayed and sets off alarms at listening posts and other ships in the region. The signal also gives the vessel's identification number and exact position.

Unlike the Morse system, which required a trained telegrapher to send the SOS, anyone on the ship can activate the GMDSS distress call. The sender also need not stick around to keep operating the call.

The first time the code was heard in public was May 24, 1844, when inventor Samuel FB Morse demonstrated his invention to members of Congress by tapping out, "What hath God wrought?"

It was the beginning of a worldwide communications revolution. The telegraph radically changed national and international business, the way wars were fought, and the way news was gathered and disseminated.

By 1872, the globe was wound by more than 650,000 miles of overland telegraph wire and 30,000 miles of submarine cable.

With the invention of the wireless radio telegraph in the 1900's, the reach extended to ships at sea. The first rescue at sea as a result of a wireless distress call came in 1899 off the coast of England.

But there was a flaw in the system, which was dramatically demonstrated on April 14, 1912, when the huge English passenger liner Titanic hit an iceberg. The ship's telegrapher broadcast a cry for help. But on the Californian, a ship only a few miles away, the radio operator had gone off duty and never heard the Titanic message. More than 1500 people died.

#### **ARRL DX News (ARLD021)**

This week's bulletin was made possible with information provided by Tedd, KB8NW, the OPDX Bulletin, The Daily DX, Dennis, K7BV,

QRZ DX, DXNL, 425DXnews and Contest Corral from QST. Thanks to all.

LIBYA, 5A. 5A1A, operated by Abubaker, has been QRV on 15 meters around 1800z.

MALDIVES, 8Q. Johan, 8Q7EM, has been QRV on 14190 khz just before 1700z. QSL via DH5HV.

MALTA, 9H. Dieter, DL9GDB, will be active as 9H3UT from May 22 to June 3, from Comino Island. QSL to home call.

CHINA, BY. Martti, OH2BH, has been operating BY1DX on 15 meters around 0530z. QSL to home call.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, A6. Ali, A61AJ, was QRV on 20 meters around 1700z. QSL via W3UR.

ALAND ISLANDS, OH0. After Market Reef, K7BV will be QRV as OH0/K7BV from the QTH of OH0Z beginning May 28 to June 4. We will use OH0Z for the WPX Contest. QSL OH0/K7BV via KU9C and OH0Z via OH1EH.

MARKET REEF, OJ0. Listen for OJ0/K7BV, OJ0U or OJ0/OH1VR, respectively, to be QRV starting May 25. Activity will be on 160 to 10 meters, including the newer bands, and RS-12. CW will mostly be used. QSL via KU9C, and OH1VR, respectively.

MICRONESIA, V6. Sam, V63KU, will be active until year's end. QSL via JA6NL.

CAMBODIA, XU. XU1YY has been QRV on 15 meters between 0500 and 0600z, and then again from 0930 to 1030z. QSL via JA6HOR.

## **SB QST ARL ARLB026 ARLB026 League tips hat to amateur volunteers**

ARRL Headquarters has issued a hearty thank you and a tip of a ten-gallon hat to all Amateur Radio volunteers during National Volunteer Week, April 18-24.

Our great hobby is even greater because of your dedication and the many types of efforts you put forth. Your volunteer activities start with planting the seed about Amateur Radio and continue in assisting with earning a license to encouraging a ham's interest in any and every aspect within Amateur Radio.

In the realm of public service, ham radio volunteers serve admirably to provide emergency communication and assistance of all types during disasters and emergencies everywhere. For disaster victims, Amateur Radio volunteers often have provided a link with the outside world when other systems failed, easing the plight of victims and helping affected communities to recover.

All of you around the United States and overseas deserve high praise.

### **Y2K & your VCR**

I have no way of knowing if this is true but it certainly is something to think about.

Here is something I bet you hadn't thought would be an issue for Y2K. You won't be able to use the programmed recording feature. "Do not throw away your VCR in the year 2000. Set it on 1972 because the days will be the same. Please pass this on because you know the manufacturer will not share this information. They will want you to buy a new one that is Y2K compliant.

### **TEMPLE UNIVERSITY QRV**

Do you know someone who will be attending Temple University in the fall? Or someone who wants to learn about ham radio on campus? Contact: Dennis Silage, K3DS 215-204-6761 E-mail: k3tu@blue.vm.temple.edu Web site: [http://www.temple.edu/radio\\_club](http://www.temple.edu/radio_club) Repeater: K3TU/R 448.200 (PL131.8)

### **For Sale**

6 Meter beam. All paperwork comes with it.  
\$25.00 Contact Joe K3RFL (215) 698-8051

Hustler G6 270R dual band vertical antenna  
6dB gain on VHF & UHF Weight 5.3 lbs.  
Height 7'6" Brand new in box. Asking \$125.00  
Contact Greg N3FSC at 215-742-7240 E-Mail  
[N3FSC@aol.com](mailto:N3FSC@aol.com)

Chrome Iambic key (paddle), straight key, and  
MFJ deluxe memory keyer. \$70.00 Contact Bill  
N3OOM (215)342-3268

For the following contact W3FYC,  
215-393-3674, [feter@erols.com](mailto:feter@erols.com).

Kenwood TS430S \$485.00 AM, FM,CW,SSB  
With MIC. and mobile mount WRAC bands,  
SSTV or AFSK

Kenwood PS430 Power supply \$95.00  
10 and 20 Amp terminals

300 W MFJ Tuner Model MFJ-949B \$60.00  
SWR POWER Meter and 300 W dummy load

### **EPA Holds ARRL Section Convention**

For the first time in decades there will be a Section Convention in EPA. The event will be held in conjunction with the Columbia-Montour ARC's Hamfest in Bloomsburg, PA on Saturday, June 12. The convention is near I-80. Directions and other info is on pg 95 of June QST or look at the club's page at <http://www.bafn.org/~cmarc>. Further info: WC3A@arrl.net.

### **March of Dimes Says Thanks**

The March of Dimes has invited HARC reps to Walk America Celebration to say thanks for providing communications at their Walk-a-thon at Lincoln High School. The last minute call that we got to help out was due to a change in offices coordinating the Northeast event. Anyone interested in attending the June 14<sup>th</sup> event in Conshohocken contact WA3PZO.



**HOLMESBURG AMATEUR RADIO CLUB**  
**P.O. Box 6253 Philadelphia, PA 19136**  
**“Serving the Community Through Ham Radio”**

***SEE YOU AT THE SKYWARN MEETING!***

**NEXT MEETING:**

**DATE:**           **MARCH 27, 1999**

**TIME:**           **8:00 PM**

**LOCATION:** NAVAL ASO (OXFORD AND MARTIN MILLS ROAD)

**TOPIC:**           **National Weather Service - SKYWARN**